



Improving meat consumption to enhance food security in West Africa

Policy recommendations from a field survey in urban areas of Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria

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ILRI and CIRAD

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Executive summary

Meat demand in West Africa is growing rapidly, driven by socioeconomic and demographic factors. This study examined meat consumption patterns and preferences of urban households in Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria, highlighting challenges and opportunities for the livestock sector and food security. Results reveal income-based consumption disparities, a preference for local products, and price and quality sensitivity.

Key recommendations

1. **Support local production:** Strengthen local livestock sector to meet growing demand and reduce dependence on imports.
2. **Improve quality and health safety:** Implement strict quality standards, modernize slaughtering and transport infrastructure, and raise awareness among industry players about good hygiene practices.
3. **Promote the consumption of local meats:** Highlight the nutritional and taste qualities of local meats, and develop quality labels to strengthen consumer confidence.
4. **Diversify the offer:** Encourage the production and marketing of a varied range of meats, including poultry, small ruminants and processed products, to meet different consumer preferences and budgets.
5. **Stabilize prices:** Establish price regulation mechanisms to protect consumers from excessive fluctuations and ensure fair access to meat.

Context

Sponsored by the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) within the framework of the Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project or (PRAPS 2), the study "Analysis of the characteristics and patterns of meat consumption and demand in West Africa" was conducted in 2023 jointly by researchers from the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and the Centre for International Cooperation in Agricultural Research for Development (CIRAD). It was carried out in 4,000 households in the capitals of Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria. Its main objective was to characterize and analyze current and future trends in meat consumption and demand as well as their sensitivity to price and income variations.

Key results

- **Consumption disparities:** Meat consumption varies considerably by income level, with a preference for fish, chicken and beef. Lower-income households consume less meat and turn to cheaper alternatives.
- **Preference for local products:** Consumers value local products, which are perceived as fresher, tastier, and healthier. However, the availability and accessibility of these products can be limited.
- **Price sensitivity:** Meat demand is sensitive to price changes, especially for low-income households. Consumers are looking for affordable products and are willing to substitute more expensive meats with less expensive alternatives.
- **Importance of quality:** Consumers are increasingly paying attention to the quality and safety of meat. Product hygiene, slaughter and transport conditions, and traceability are important selection criteria.
- **Role of eating habits and cultural factors:** Eating habits and cultural factors strongly influence consumers' meat preferences and choices. Traditional dishes, religious festivals and social events play a key role in meat consumption.

Recommendations

1. Support local meat production:

- Invest in livestock infrastructure, such as slaughterhouses, collection centers and processing units.
- Strengthen the capacities of breeders in breeding techniques, herd management and animal health.

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- Facilitate access for breeders to inputs (animal feed, veterinary medicines) and financial services (credit, insurance).
- 2. Improving quality and health safety:**
 - Establish and enforce strict quality standards for the production, slaughter, transportation and sale of meat.
 - Modernize slaughtering and transport infrastructure, favoring refrigerated equipment to guarantee the cold chain.
 - Raise awareness among industry stakeholders about good hygiene and health safety practices.
 - Strengthen veterinary and health controls and punish violations.
 - 3. Promote the consumption of local meats:**
 - Conduct communication campaigns to highlight the nutritional, taste and cultural qualities of local meats.
 - Develop quality labels to guarantee the origin and quality of products, and strengthen consumer confidence.
 - Organize fairs and promotional events to showcase the diversity of local meats.
 - 4. Diversify the meats on offer:**
 - Encourage the production and marketing of a diverse range of meats, including poultry, small ruminants (sheep, goats) and processed products (minced meat, sausages, cold cuts).
 - Support the development of aquaculture to increase fish production and diversify sources of animal protein.
 - 5. Stabilize meat prices:**
 - Establish price regulation mechanisms, such as buffer stocks or targeted subsidies, to protect consumers from excessive fluctuations.
 - Facilitate consumers' access to price information, for example by developing mobile applications or online platforms.

Conclusion

Growing demand for meat in West Africa must be supported by the development of the livestock sector so that the increase in demand does not lead to an increase in prices and limit consumer choice based on income, thereby compromising national and regional food security. By implementing the proposed recommendations, countries in the region

can ensure a safe, quality and accessible meat supply for all, thus contributing to public health, economic development and the preservation of local culinary traditions.

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